

WHO WERE THE SHUDRAS ?

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CHAPTER X

THE DEGRADATION OF THE SHUDRAS

WHAT is the technique which the Brahmins employed to bring about the degradation of the Shudras from the rank of the second to the rank of the fourth Varna?

The discussion has so far centred round two questions as to whether or not the Shudras were originally a part of the second or Kshatriya Varna and whether or not the Brahmins had not received sufficient provocation to degrade the Shudras. It is now necessary to deal with the question, which is logically next in order of sequence. What is the technique of degradation employed by the Brahmins?

My answer to the question is that the technique employed by the Brahmins for this purpose was to refuse to perform the Upanayana of the Shudras. I have no doubt that it is by this technique that the Brahmins accomplished their end and thereby wreaked their vengeance upon the Shudras.

It is perhaps necessary to explain what Upanayana means and what importance it had in the Indo-Aryan Society. The best way to give an idea of Upanayana is to give a description of the ceremony.

As a rite *Upanayana* was originally a very simple ceremony. The boy came to the teacher with a *samidh* (a grass blade) in his hand and told the teacher that he desired to become a Brahmachari (i.e a student) and begged the teacher to allow him to stay with him for purposes of study. At a later date it became a very elaborate ceremony. How elaborate it had become may be realised from the following description of *Upanayana* in the Ashvalayana Grihya sutra :*

Let him initiate the boy who is decked, whose hair (on the head) is shaved (and arranged), who wears a new garment or an antelope skin if a Brahmana, ruru skin if a Kshatriya, a goat's skin if a Vaishya; if they put on garments they should put on dyed ones, reddish-yellow, red and yellow (for a Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya respectively); they should have girdles and staffs (as described above). While the boy takes hold of (the hand of) his teacher, the latter offers (a homa of clarified butter oblations) in the fire (as described

above), and seats himself to the north of the fire with his face turned to the east, while the other one (the boy) stations himself in front (of the teacher) with his face turned to the west. The teacher then fills the folded hands of both himself and of the boy with water and with the verse 'we choose that of Savitri' (Rg.V. 82.1) the teacher drops down the water in his own folded hands on to the water in the folded hands of the boy; having thus poured the water, he should seize with his own hand the boy's hand together with the thumb (of the boy) with the formula 'by the urge (or order) of the god Savitri, with the arms of the two Ashvins, with the hands of Pushan, I seize thy hand, oh so, and so,' with the words 'Savitri has seized thy hand, oh so and so' a second time (the teacher seizes the boy's hand) with the words 'Agni is thy teacher oh so and so' a third time. The teacher should cause (the boy, to look at the sun, while the teacher repeats 'God Savitri, this is thy brahmachari protect him, may he not die' and (the teacher should further) say 'Whose brahmachari art thou? thou art the brahmachari of Prana. Who does initiate thee and whom (does he initiate)? I give thee to Ka (to Prajapati).' With the half verse (Rg. 111.8.4) 'the young man well attired and dressed, come hither' he (the teacher) should cause him to turn round to the right and with his two hands placed over (the boy's) shoulders he should touch the place of the boy's heart repeating the latter half (of Rg. III. 8.4). Having wiped the ground round the fire, the brahmachari should put (on the fire) a fuel stick silently, since it is known (from sruti) 'what belongs to Prajapati is silently done,' and the brahmachari belongs to Prajapati. Some do this (offering of a fuel stick) with a mantra to Agni : I Have brought a fuel stick, to *the* great Jatavedas; by the fuel stick mayst thou increase. Oh agni and may we (increase) through *brahman*' (prayer or spiritual lore), svaha.' Having put the fuel stick (on the fire) and having touched the fire, he (the student) thrice wipes off his face with the words 'I anoint myself with lustre,' it is known (from sruti) for he does anoint himself with lustre. 'May Agni bestow on me, insight, offspring and lustre: on me may Indra bestow insight, offspring and vigour (Indriya) ;on me may the sun bestow insight, offspring and radiance; what thy lustre is. Oh Agni, may I thereby become lustrous; what the strength is, Agni, may I thereby become strong; what thy consuming power is, Agni, may I thereby acquire consuming power.' Having waited upon (worshipped) Agni with these formulae, (the student) should bend his knees, embrace (the teachers feet) and say to him 'recite. Sir, recite. Sir, the Savitri.' Seizing the student's hands with the upper garment (of the student) and his own hands, the teacher recites the Savitri first pada by pada, then hemistich by hemistich (and lastly) the whole verse. He (the teacher) should make him (the student) recite (the Savitiri) as much as *he* is able. On the place of the student's heart the teacher

lays his hand with the fingers upturned with the formula place thy heart unto duty to me, may thy mind follow my mind; may you attend on my words single-minded; may Brihaspati appoint thee unto me.' Having tied the girdle round him (the boy) and having given him the staff, the teacher should instruct him in the observances of a brahmachari with the words 'a brahmachari art thou, sip water, do service, do not sleep by day, depending (completely) on the teacher learn the Veda.' He (the student) should beg (food) in the evening and the morning; he should put a fuel stick (on fire) in the evening and morning. That (which he has received by begging) he should announce to the teacher; he should not sit down (but should be standing) the rest of the day.

The Upanayana ends with the teaching by the Acharya to the boy of the Vedic Mantra known as the Gayatri Mantra. Why the Gayatri Mantra is regarded as so essential as to require the ceremony of Upanayana before it is taught it is difficult to say.

From this description of the Upanayana ceremony two things are clear. First is that the purpose of Upanayana was to initiate a person in the study of the Vedas which commenced with the teaching of Gayatri Mantra by the Acharya to the Brahmachari. The second thing that is clear is that certain articles were regarded as very essential for the Upanayana ceremony. They are (1) two garments one for the lower part of the body technically called *Vasa* and the other for the upper part of the body called *Uttariya*, (2) Danda or wooden staff, (3) Mekhala or a girdle of grass tied across the waist.

Any one who compares this description of Upanayana as it was performed in ancient times with the details of the ceremony as performed in later days is bound to be surprised at the absence of any mention of thread called *Yajnopavita* to be worn by the Brahmachari as a part of his Upanayana. The centre of the modern ceremony of Upanayana is the wearing of this thread and the whole purpose of the Upanayana has come to be the wearing of this *Yajnopavita*. So important a part this *Yajnopavita* has come to play that most elaborate rules have come to be framed about its manufacture and its use.

The *Yajnopavita* should have three threads, each thread to be of nine strands well twisted. One *tantu* (strand) stands for one devata (deity).

The *Yajnopavita* should reach as far as the navel, should not reach beyond the navel, nor should it be above the chest.

A person could wear more than one *Yajnopavita*.

A man must always wear *Yajnopavita*. If he took his meals without wearing the *Yajnopavita*, or answers the call of nature without having the *Yajnopavita* placed on the right ear, he had to undergo prayascitta, viz., to bathe, to mutter prayers and fast.

Wearing of another's *Yajnopavita* along with several other things (such as shoes, ornament, garland and kamandalu) is forbidden.

Three ways of wearing the *Yajnopavita* are recognised: (1) *nivita*, (2) *pracinavita* and (3) *upavita*. When the cord is carried over the neck, both shoulders and the chest and is held with both the thumbs (of the two hands) lower than the region of the heart and above the navel, it is called *nivita*. Suspending the cord over the left shoulder in such a way that it hangs down on his right side, it becomes *upavita*. Suspending it on his right shoulder in such a way that it hangs down on his left side, it becomes *pracinavita*.

How did this *Yajnopavita* come in? Mr. Tilak offers an explanation which is worth quoting. Mr. Tilak says :

"Orion or Mrigashiras is called Prajapati in the Vedic works, otherwise called Yajna. A belt or girdle of cloth round the waist of Orion or Yajna will therefore be naturally named after him as *Yajnopavita*, the *upavita* or the cloth of *yajna*

The term, however, now denotes the sacred thread of the Brahmins, and it may naturally be asked whether it owes its character, if not the origin, to the belt of Orion. I think it does on the following grounds :

The word *yajnopavita* is derived by all native scholars from *Yajna + Upavita*; but there is a difference of opinion as to whether we should understand the compound to mean an *upavita* for *yajna* i.e for sacrificial purposes, or, whether it is the 'upavita of Yajnas.' The former is not incorrect, but authority is in favour of the latter. Thus the Prayoga-writers quote a *smriti* to the effect that 'the High Soul is termed *Yajna* by the hotris, this is his *upavita*; therefore it is *yajna-upavita*. ' A mantra, which is recited on the occasion of wearing the sacred thread means, '1 bind you with the *upavita* of *yajna*', while the first half of the general formula with which a Brahmin always puts on his sacred thread is as follows :

Yagnyopaveetham paramapavithram prajhpatheryathsahajam purasthaath

The Mantra is not to be found in any of the existing Samhitas, but is given in the Brahmapanishad and by Baudhayana. This verse is strikingly similar to the verse quoted above from the Haoma Yesht. It says, 'yajnopavita is high and sacred; it was born with Prajapati, of old.' The word *purastat* corresponds with *paurvanim* in the Avesta verse and thus decides the question raised by Dr. Haug, while *sahaja*, born with the limbs of Prajapati, conveys the same meaning as *mainyutastem*. The coincidence between these verses cannot be accidental, and it appears to me that the sacred thread must be derived from the belt of Orion. *Upavita*, from *ve* to weave, literally means a piece of cloth and not a thread. It appears, therefore, that a cloth worn round the waist was the primitive form of *yajnopavita*, and that the idea of sacredness was

introduced by the theory that it was to be a symbolic representation of Prajapati's waistcloth or belt."

This explanation by Mr. Tilak is no doubt very interesting. But it does not help to explain some of the difficulties. It does not explain the relation of the *Yajnopavita* to the two garments the *Uttariya*, and the *vasa*, which are necessary for a person to wear while undergoing *Upanayana*. Was the *Yajnopavita* in addition to the two garments? If so, how is it that there is no mention of it in the early description of the ceremony of the *Upanayana*? It does not explain another difficulty. If that thread is a substitute for the cloth, how is it that the wearing of the cloth is retained in the *Upanayana*?

There seems to be another explanation. I offer it for what it is worth. According to it, the wearing of the thread had to do with the adoption of the *gotra*. Its object was to tie oneself to a particular *gotra*. It had nothing to do with the *Upanayana* as such, the object of which was to initiate a person in the study of the Vedas. It is not sufficiently realized that under the Ancient Aryan Law, a son did not naturally inherit the *gotra* of his father. The father had to perform a special ceremony to give his *gotra* to his son. It is only when this ceremony was performed that the son became the same *gotra* as the father. In this connection, reference may be made to two rules observed by the Indo-Aryan Society. One is the rule of impurities. The other is the rule of adoption. With regard to the rule of impurity, brought about by death, the days of impurity vary with the kinship with the dead. If the kinship is very close, the days of impurity are greater than those in the case where the kinship is less close. The impurities attached to the death of a boy who has not been invested with the thread are very meagre, not extending for more than a few days. With regard to the rule of adoption, it lays down that a boy who was invested with the thread was not eligible for adoption. What is the idea behind these rules? The idea seems to be quite clear. The impurities are nominal because there being no thread, the boy had not formally entered into the *gotra* of his father. Adoption means entering into the *gotra* of the adoptive father. Once the thread ceremony had taken place the boy had already and irrevocably entered another *gotra*.

There was no room for adoption left. Both these rules show that the thread ceremony was connected with *gotra* and not with *Upanayana*.

The view that the thread has connection with *gotra* seems to receive support from Jain literature. Shloka 87 of the fourth Parvan of the Padmapurana by Acharya Ravishena reads as follows :

"Bhagwan ! you have told us, the origin of Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. I am anxious to know the origin of those who wear the thread in their neck."

The words 'those who wear the thread in the neck' are very important. There is no doubt that it is a description of the Brahmins. From this it is clear that

there was a time when the Brahmins alone wore the thread and no other class did. Read with the fact that the *gotra* relationship was confined only to the Brahmins, it is clear that the thread ceremony was connected with bringing the boy into— actually tying him up to the *gotra*— of his father, and had nothing to do with *Upanayana* which was connected with the initiation in the teaching of the Vedas.

If this is true, then the thread ceremony and the *Upanayana* ceremony had different purposes to serve. At some later date the two merged into one. The reason for this merger appears to be very natural. The *Upanayana* without the thread ceremony involved the danger of the Acharya taking the boy in his *gotra*. It was to avoid the danger that the father of the boy performed the thread ceremony before handing him over to the Acharya. This is the probable reason why the two ceremonies came to be performed simultaneously.

Be that as it may, *Upanayana* means the teaching of the Veda by the Vedic Brahmin.

III

While I am convinced that my thesis is sound, it would be over confident to think that there will not be found persons who will not raise objections to it. I anticipate the following :

- (1) Is absence of *Upanayana* the test of Shudradom;
- (2) Did the Shudra ever have the right to *Upanayana*?
- (3) How can the loss of *Upanayana* result in the general degradation of Shudras?
- (4) What power did the Brahmins have to deny *Upanayana* to the Shudras?

Having stated the possible objections to my thesis, I like to give my reply to them.

IV

To begin with the first. The best way to deal with this objection is to refer to the judicial decisions in order to find out what the Courts in India have regarded as the surest criterion for determining who is a Shudra.

The first case to which reference may be made is to be found in 7, M.I.A.18. It was decided by the Privy Council in 1837. The question at issue was whether at the relevant time there were in India any Kshatriyas. The contention of one side was that there were. The contention on the other side was that there were none. The latter contention was based upon the theory propagated by the Brahmins that the Brahmin Parashurama had killed all the Kshatriyas and that if any were left they were all exterminated by the Shudra king Mahapadma Nanda, so that thereafter there were no Kshatriyas left and that there were only

Brahmins and Shudras. The Privy Council did not accept this theory which they regarded as false and concocted by the Brahmins and held that the Kshatriyas still existed in India. The Privy Council did not however lay down any test by which a Kshatriya could be distinguished from a Shudra. In their view, the question must be determined in each case on its own facts.

The second case on the subject is to be found in I.L.R.10 Cal. 688. The question raised in the case was whether the Kayasthas of Bihar were Kshatriyas or Shudras. The High Court decided that they were Shudras. The partisans of the Kayasthas took the position that the Kayasthas of Bihar were different from the Kayasthas of Bengal, the Upper Provinces and Benares and that while those in the Upper Provinces and Benares were Shudras, the Kayasthas of Bihar were Kshatriyas. The court refused to make this distinction and held that the Kayasthas of Bihar were also Shudras.

The validity of this judgement was not accepted by the Allahabad High Court. In I.L.R.12 All. 328. Justice Mahamood at page 334 observed as follows:

"I entertain considerable doubts as to the soundness of the view which seems to have been adopted by both the Courts below, that the literary caste of *Kayasthas* in this part of the country, to which the parties belong, falls under the category of *Shudras*, as understood in the division of mankind in (the Institute of Manu or elsewhere in authoritative texts of the Hindu Law. The question is one of considerable difficulty not only ethnologically, but also from a legal point of view, so far as the administration of the Hindu Law to this important section of the population is concerned. I do not take the question to be settled by any adjudication of the Lords of the Privy Council either in *Sri Narayan Mitter vs. Sree Mutty Kishen Soondoory Dasse*, or in *Mahashova Shosinath Ghose vs. Srimati Krishna Soondari Dasi* in both of which the cases referred to adoption by Kayasthas of Lower Bengal, who may be distinguishable from the twelve castes of Kayasthas in Upper India, such as the North-western Provinces and Oudh. Nor do I think that the unreported decision of the learned Chief Justice and my brother Tyrell in *Chaudhari Hazari Lal versus Bishnu Dial* (First Appeal No. 113 of 1886, decided on the 15th June 1887), which was also an adoption case, settles the question. But I need not pursue the subject any further...."

The third case is reported in (1916) 20 Cal. W.N.901. Here the question raised was whether Kayasthas of Bengal were Kshatriyas or Shudras. The High Court of Calcutta held that they were Shudras. The case was taken to the Privy Council by way of appeal against the decision of the Calcutta High Court. The decision of the Privy Council is reported in (1926) 47 I.A. 140. The question whether the Bengali Kayasthas are Shudras or Kshatriyas was not decided

upon by the Privy Council but was left open. In between 1916 and 1926 the Calcutta High Court gave two decisions which held that intermarriages between Kayasthas of Bengal and *Tantisand Domes* two of the low castes, were legal on the ground that both of them were sub-castes of Shudras.

These decisions which caused further deterioration in the position of the Kayasthas were followed by another which is reported in I.L.R. 6 Patna 506. In a most elaborate judgement extending over 47 pages Mr. Justice Jwala Prasad went into every Purana and every Smriti in which there was a reference to the Kayasthas. He differed from the Calcutta High Court and held that the Kayasthas of Bihar were Kshatriyas.

Next come cases in which the question at issue was whether the Maharattas are Kshatriyas or Shudras. The first case in which this issue was raised is reported in 48 Mad. 1. This was an interpleader suit filed by the Receiver of the estate of Raja of Tanjore in which all the descendants as well as the distant agnates and cognates of the Raja were made defendants in the suit. The kingdom of Tanjore was founded by Venkoji, otherwise called Ekoji, who was a Mahratta and the brother of Shivaji the founder of the Mahratta Empire. The judgement in the case covers 229 pages and the question whether the Mahrattas were Kshatriyas was dealt with in a most exhaustive manner. The decision of the Madras High Court was that the Mahrattas were Shudras and not Kshatriyas as was contended by the defendants.

The next case which also relates to the Mahrattas is reported in I.L.R. (1928) 52 Bom.497. The Court decided that :

"There are three classes among the Mahrattas in the Bombay Presidency: (1) the five families; (2) the ninety-six families; (3) *the rest*. Of these, the first two classes are legally Kshatriyas."

The last case to which reference may be made is reported in I.L.R. (1927) 52 Mad. 1. The issue was whether the Yadavas of Madura were Kshatriyas. The Yadavas claimed themselves to be Kshatriyas. But the Madras High Court negated the claim and held that they were Shudras.

Such is the course of judicial pronouncements on the issue as to how to determine who is a Kshatriya and who is a Shudra. It is a most confusing medley of opinion which settles little and unsettles much. The Kayasthas of Bihar, of the Upper Provinces (now U.P) and Benares are Kshatriyas, while the Kayasthas of Bengal are Shudras!! According to the Madras High Court all Mahrattas are Shudras. But according to the Bombay High Court, Mahrattas belonging to five families and 96 families are Kshatriyas and the rest are Shudras!! The Yadava community to which Krishna belonged is popularly believed to be Kshatriyas. But according to the Madras High Court, the Yadavas are Shudras!!

More important for our purpose are the criteria which the courts have adopted in coming to their decisions than the particular decisions in the cases referred to. Among the criteria which the courts have laid down, the following may be noted:

- (1) In I.L.R. 10 Cal. 688, the criteria adopted were (i) use of Das as surname, (ii) wearing the sacred thread, (iii) ability to perform the *homa*, (iv) the period of impurity, (v) competence or incompetence of illegitimate sons to succeed.
- (2) In I.L.R. 6 Patna 606, the criterion seems to be general repute. If a community is Kshatriya by general repute it is to be treated as a Kshatriya community.
- (3) In 48 Madras I, a variety of criteria were adopted. One was the consciousness of the community. The second was undergoing the ceremony of *Upanayana* as distinguished from wearing the sacred thread. The third criterion was that all non-Brahmins are Shudras unless they prove that they are Kshatriyas or Vaishyas.
- (4) In I.L.R. Bom. 497, the tests adopted were (i) the consciousness of the caste (ii) its custom, and (iii) the acceptance of that consciousness by other castes.

No one who knows anything about the subject can say that the criteria adopted by the various courts are the right ones. A criterion such as the period of impurity is irrelevant and of no value for determining the question. A criterion such as the capacity for performing *homa* is relevant but not valid. It mistakes effect for a cause. The criterion of consciousness is hardly a fair criterion. A community may have lost its consciousness by long disuse of necessary religious observances due to causes over which it has no control. The criterion of *Upanayana* stands on a different footing. The courts have not put it properly. But there is no doubt that rightly understood and properly put the criterion of *Upanayana* is sound. The Courts have not made any distinction between the *de facto* position of the community and its position *de jure* in regard to *Upanayana*, and have proceeded on the assumption that what is true *de facto* must also be true *de jure*. It is this fault in the application of the criterion of *Upanayana* which has produced anomalies and absurdities, such as one community having one status in one area and quite a different status in a different area— or allowing any pretender community to wear the thread and by continuing its pretence for a period to acquire a vested right or contrariwise punishing a community by declaring that it had no *de jure* right to wear the thread merely because it has not been wearing it *de facto*. The real criterion is not the wearing of the sacred thread but the right to wear the sacred thread. Understood in its proper sense, it may be said without fear of contradiction that the right to *Upanayana* is the real

and the only test of judging the status of a person whether he is a Shudra or a Kshatriya.

V

The second objection is quite untenable. To assume, as the objection does, that from the very beginning the Aryan Society treated its different classes differently in the matter of *Upanayana* is to my mind a very unnatural supposition. Primitive society does not begin with differentiation. It begins with uniformity and ends in diversity. The natural thing would be to suppose that in the matter of the *Upanayana* the ancient Aryan society treated all its classes on the same footing. It may however be argued, on the other side, that such an original tendency in favour of uniformity need not be accepted as being universal, that it may well be that in the ancient Aryan society the Shudras and the women were excluded from *Upanayana*. Fortunately for me, it is not necessary for me to rely on logic alone though I contend that *logic* is on my side. For there is ample evidence both circumstantial as well as direct to show that both Shudras as well as women had at one time the right to wear the sacred thread.

That the ancient Aryan society regarded *Upanayana* as essential for all will be evident if the following facts are borne in mind.

Upanayana was allowed for the deaf, the dumb, the idiot and even the impotent. A special procedure was prescribed for the *Upanayana* of the deaf and dumb and idiots. The principal points in which their *Upanayana* differs from that of others are that the offering of *Samidh*, treading on a stone, putting on a garment, the tying of *mekhala*, the giving of deer skin and staff are done silently, that the boy does not mention his name, it is the *acharya* a himself who makes offering of cooked food or of clarified butter, all the *mantras* are muttered softly by the *acharya* a himself. The same procedure is followed as to other persons who are impotent, blind, lunatic, suffering from such diseases as epilepsy, white leprosy or black leprosy, etc.

The six *anuloma* castes were also eligible for *Upanayana*; this is clear from the rules for the *Upanayana* of Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and of mixed castes like Rathakara, Ambashtha, etc,

Upanayana was permitted to *Patitasavitrikas*. The proper age for the *Upanayana* of a Brahman boy was 8th year from birth, of a Kshatriya 11th year and of a Vaishya 12th year. But a certain latitude was allowed so that the time for *Upanayana* was not deemed to have passed upon the 16th, the 22nd and the 24th year in the case of Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas respectively. After these years are passed without *Upanayana* taking place, a person was held to have become incompetent thereafter for learning the Savitri (the sacred Gayatri verse). Such persons were then called *Patitasavitrika* or *savitripatita*.

According to the strict interpretation of rules, no *Upanayana* is to be thereafter performed for them, they are not to be taught the Veda, nor is anyone to officiate at their sacrifices and there is to be no social intercourse with them (i.e., no marriage takes place with them). But even in their case, there was readiness to relax the rules subject to certain penances.

Upanayana was permitted in the case of Brahmagnas. A Brahmagna is a person whose father or grandfather had failed to perform *Upanayana*. The original rule was that if a person's father and grandfather also had not the *Upanayana* performed for them then they (i.e., the three generations) are called slayers of *brahma* (holy prayers or lore); people should have no intercourse with them, should not take their food nor should enter into marriage alliance with them. But even in their case the rule was relaxed and they were allowed *Upanayana* if they desired, provided they performed the prescribed penance.

A further relaxation was made in the case of a person whose generation beginning with the great grandfather had not the *Upanayana* performed on them. Even they were allowed to have their *Upanayana* performed if they desired, provided they performed penance which included studenthood for twelve years and bath with the Pavamani, and other verses. On his *Upanayana*, instruction in the duties of the householder was imparted to him, and though he himself could not be taught the Veda, his son may have the samskara performed as in the case of one who is himself a *patitasavitrika* so that his son will be 'one like other Arya'.

Upanayana was permitted to the Vratyas. It is difficult to state exactly who the Vratyas were, whether they were Aryans who had for more than three generations failed to perform the *Upanayana* or whether they were non-Aryans who were never within the Aryan fold and whom the Brahmins wanted to convert to the Aryan faith. It is possible that it included both. Be that as it may, there is no doubt that *Upanayana* was open to the Vratyas provided they performed Vratyastomas. Vratyas were those who lead the Vratya life, were base and were reduced to a baser state since they did not observe studenthood (*brahmacharya*) nor did they till the soil nor engage in trade. There were four Vratyastomas, the first of which is meant for all Vratyas, the second is meant for those who are *Abhishasta* who are wicked or guilty of heavy sins and are censured and lead a Vratya life, the third for those who are the youngest and lead a Vratya life and the fourth for those who are very old and yet lead a Vratya life. In each of the four Vratyastomas, Sodasastoma is always performed. It is by the Sodasastoma that they can attain this (superior status). The Sodasastoma was supposed to have the power to remove the guilt of these. By performing the Vratyastoma sacrifice, they should cease to be Vratyas and become eligible for social intercourse with the Orthodox Aryas, to

have the sacrament (*samskara* of Upanayana) performed of them and then be eligible to study the Veda.

In the Vratyata-shuddisamgraha provision is made for the purification of Vratyas even after twelve generations subject to appropriate penances.

Upanayana was so highly thought of that Baudhayana (ii.10) allowed Upanayana for the Asvattha tree.

Given these facts, it is difficult to believe that the women and Shudras were excluded from the Upanayana by the Aryan society from the very beginning. In this connection, attention may be drawn to custom prevalent among the Indo-Iranians who were very closely related to the Indo-Aryans in their culture and religion. Among the Indo-Iranians, not only both men and women but men and women of all classes are invested with the sacred thread. It is for the opponents to prove why the system was different among the Indo-Aryans.

It is, however, not quite necessary to depend upon circumstantial evidence. There is enough direct evidence to show that there was a time when both women and Shudras had the right to Upanayana and did have it performed.

As to the Upanayana of women the statements contained in the Hindu religious books are quite explicit. Anyone who examines them will find that Upanayana was open to women. Women not only learned the Vedas but they used to run schools for teaching the Vedas, are even known to have written commentaries on the Women Purva Mimamsa.

As to the Shudras, the evidence is equally positive. If Sudas was a king, if Sudas was a Shudra, if his coronation ceremony was performed by Vasishtha and he performed the Rajasuya Yaga, then there can be no doubt that the Shudras did at one time wear the sacred thread. In addition to circumstantial evidence and the evidence of the authors mentioned before, the Sanskara Ganapati cited by Max Muller contains an express provision declaring the Shudra to be eligible for Upanayana.

The only difference between the women and the Shudras is that in the case of women there is some plausible explanation given as to why the Upanayana of women was stopped, while there is no such explanation for stopping the Upanayana of the Shudras. It is argued that the Upanayana of women continued as long as the age of Upanayana and the age of marriage continued to be different. It is said that in ancient times the age of Upanayana was 8 and the age for marriage was considerably later. But at a later stage, the age of marriage was brought down to 8, with the result that the Upanayana as an independent ceremony ceased to exist and became merged in marriage. Whether this explanation is right or wrong is another matter. The point is that in the case of the Shudra, the Upanayana was at one time open to him, that it was closed to him at a later stage and that there is no explanation for this change.

Those who, in spite of the evidence to which I have referred, think that they must insist upon their objection should remember the weakness of their side. Assuming that the Shudras had never had the benefit of Upanayana, the question they have to face is why were the Shudras not allowed the benefit of the Upanayana. The orthodox theory merely states the fact that there is no Upanayana for a Shudra. But it does not say why the Shudra is not to have his Upanayana performed. The explanation that there was no Upanayana of the Shudra because he was a non-Aryan is a modern invention which has been shown to be completely baseless. Either there was once an Upanayana and it was stopped or the Upanayana was from the very beginning withheld. Either may be true. But before one or the other is accepted to be true, it must be accompanied by reasons. There being no reason why the benefit of the Upanayana was withheld from the Shudra, the presumption must be in favour of my thesis which states that they had the right to Upanayana, that they were deprived of it and gives reasons why they were deprived of its validity.

VI

The third objection is no objection at all. Only a person who does not know fully all the incidents of Upanayana can persist in upholding its validity.

The Aryan society regarded certain ceremonies as Samskaras. The Gautama Dharma Sutra (VIII. 14-24) gives the number of Samskaras as forty. They are :

Garbhadhana Pumsavana, Simantonnayana, Jatakarma, namakarana, annaprasana, caula, Upanayana, the four vratas of the Veda, Snana (or Samavartana), vivaha, five daily mahayajnas (for deva, pitri, manushya, bhuta, and Brahma); seven pakayajnas (viz., astaka, parvanasthalipaka, sraddha sravani, agrahayani, caitri, asvayuji); seven haviryajnas (in which there is burnt offering but no Soma, viz., Agnyadheya, Agnihotra, Darsapuramasa, Agrayana, Caturmasyas, Nirudhapasubandha and Sautramani); seven soma sacrifices (Agnistoma, Atyagnistoma, Ukthya, Sodasin, Vajapeya, Atiratra, Aptoryama).

At a late stage a distinction appears to have been drawn between Samskaras in the narrower sense and Samskaras in the wider sense. Samskaras in the wider sense were really sacrifices and were therefore not included in the Samskaras in the proper sense, which were reduced to sixteen.

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There is nothing strange about the Samskaras. Every society recognises

them. For instance, the Christians regard Baptism, Confirmation, Matrimony, Extreme Unction, Eucharist, the Lord's Supper and the Holy Communion as sacraments. There however seems to be a difference between the notions of the Indo-Aryans and say the Christians about the Samskaras. According to Christian notions, the Samskara or Sacrament is a purely spiritual matter—drawing in of God's grace by particular rites. It had no social significance. Among the Indo-Aryans the Samskaras had originally a purely spiritual significance. This is clear from what Jaimini the author of the *Purva Mimamsa* has to say about the Samskaras. According to Jaimini the general theory is that Samskaras impart fitness. They act in two ways. They remove taints and they generate fresh qualities. Without such Samskaras, a person may not get the reward of his sacrifice on the ground that he is not fit to perform it. Upanayana was one of the Samskaras and like other Samskaras, its significance was just spiritual. The denial of the Upanayana to the Shudras necessarily brought about a change in its significance. In addition to its spiritual significance it acquired a social significance which it did not have before.

When Upanayana was open to everyone, Aryan or non-Aryan, it was not a matter of social significance. It was a common right of all. It was not a privilege of the few. Once it was denied to the Shudras, its possession became a matter of honour and its denial a badge of servility. The denial of Upanayana to the Shudras introduced a new factor in the Indo Aryan society. It made the Shudras look up to the higher classes as their superiors and enabled the three higher classes to look down upon the Shudras as their inferiors. This is one way in which the loss of Upanayana brought about the degradation of the Shudras.

There are other incidents of Upanayana. Since idea of these can be had if one refers to the rules laid down in the *Purva Mimamsa* One of these rules is that all property is meant primarily for the purpose of providing a person with the means of performing a sacrifice. The right to property is dependent upon capacity to sacrifice In other words, anyone who suffers from an incapacity to perform a sacrifice has no right to property. Capacity to sacrifice depends upon Upanayana. This means that only those who are entitled to Upanayana have a right to own property.

The second rule of the *Purva Mimamsa* is that a sacrifice must be accompanied by Veda mantras. This means that the sacrificer must have undergone a course in the study of the Veda. A person who has not studied the Vedas is not competent to perform the sacrifices. The study of the Veda is open only to those persons who have undergone the Upanayana ceremony. In other words, capacity to acquire knowledge and learning— which is what the study of Veda means—is dependant upon Upanayana. If there is no Upanayana the road to knowledge is closed. Upanayana is no empty ceremony. Right to property

and right to knowledge are the two most important incidents of Upanayana.

Those who cannot realise how loss of Upanayana can bring about the degradation of the Shudras should have no difficulty in understanding the matter if they will bear in mind the rules of the Purva Mimamsa referred to above. Once the relation of Upanayana to education and property is grasped, all difficulty in accepting the thesis that the degradation of the Shudra was entirely due to loss of Upanayana must vanish.

It will be seen, from what has been said above, how the sacrament of Upanayana was in the ancient Aryan society fundamental and how the social status and personal rights of persons depended upon it. Without Upanayana, a person was doomed to social degradation, to ignorance and to poverty. The stoppage of Upanayana was a most deadly weapon- discovered by the Brahmins to avenge themselves against the Shudras. It had the effect of an atomic bomb. It did make the Shudra, to use the language of the Brahmins, a graveyard.

VII

That the Brahmins possessed the power to deny Upanayana is beyond question. The doubt probably arises from the fact that there is nowhere an express statement showing the conferment of such a power upon the Brahmins. All the same, whatever doubt there may be lurking in the minds of persons who are not aware of the operative parts of the religious system of the Indo-Aryans must vanish if account is taken of two things: (1) the exclusive right of the Brahmin to officiate at the Upanayana and (2) the penalties imposed upon the Brahmin for performing unauthorised Upanayana.

It is probable that in most ancient times it was the father who taught his son the *Gayatri*, with which the study of the Veda begins and for which the ceremony of Upanayana was devised at a later stage. But it is beyond question that from a very early time the function of performing Upanayana had been assigned to a guru or a teacher called the Acharya and the boy went and stayed in the Acharya's house.

The questions as to who should be the Acharya and what should be his qualification have been the subject of discussions from very ancient times.

The Acharya must be a man learned in the Vedas. A Brahmana text says, "he, whom a teacher devoid of learning initiates, enters from darkness into darkness and he also (i.e. an acharya) who is himself unlearned (enters into darkness)."

The Ap. Dh. S. (1.1.1.12—13), lays down that an Acharya selected for performing one's Upanayana should be endowed with learning and should be one whose family is hereditarily learned and who is serene in mind, and that

one should study Vedic lore under him up to the end (of brahmacharya) as long as the teacher does not fall off from the path of Dharma.

But the first and foremost qualification of an Acharya is that he must be a Brahmana: It was only in times of difficulty (i.e., when a Brahmana is not available) that a person was allowed to have a Kshatriya or a Vaishya teacher. This exception was permitted only during the period when the distinction between the right to learn the Vedas and the right to teach the Vedas had not been made. But when that distinction came to be made—and it was made in very early times—in fact the conflict between Vasishtha and Vishvamitra was just on this very point—the Brahmin alone came to possess the right to be an Acharya fit to officiate at an Upanayana.

One thing therefore must be taken as well-established, namely that none but a Brahmin could perform the Upanayana ceremony. Upanayana performed by anybody else is not a valid Upanayana.

The other operative part of the Indo-Aryan religious system is the obligation imposed upon the Brahmin not to do any unauthorised act of a religious character. A Brahmin guilty of any such conduct was liable to punishment or penance. Many such penalties are to be found in the ancient Law Books. I refer to Manu and Parashara.

Manu (III.150ff.), lays down what class of Brahmins are to be deemed unworthy (to partake) of oblations to the gods and manes. In this list he includes :

III. 156.— "He who teaches for a stipulated fee and he who is taught on that condition, he who instructs Shudra pupils and he whose teacher is a Shudra, he who speaks rudely, the son of an adultress, and the son of a widow."

Parashara says :

"That Brahmana, who for the sake of dakshina (gift of money or fee) offers oblation into fire on behalf of a Shudra, would become a Shudra, while the Shudra (for whom he offers) would become a Brahman;" that, according to Madhava, propounds that the merit of the rite "goes to the Shudra and the Brahmana. incurs sin."

Those who may ask what powers the Brahmins had to deprive the Shudra of his right to Upanayana may consider the combined effect of these two facts : (1) the Brahmin's exclusive right to officiate at an Upanayana, and (2) the penalties to which he is made liable for performing an unauthorized Upanayana. If they do, they will have no doubt that the combined effect of these two factors was to vest in the Brahmin the power of performing as well as of denying Upanayana. It is true that such a power has not been expressly vested in the Brahmin. That was because it was unnecessary to do by express terms what was in fact done by indirect but more effectual means. That the

Brahmins are conscious of the possession of this power to deny Upanayana? is also beyond doubt. So far as the records go, there are 16 reported cases in which they have threatened various communities by putting it into operation against them. In nine cases, they challenged the Kayasthas, in four they challenged the Panchalas, in one they challenged the Palshes. What is important is that they challenged even two Maratha Kings. These instances have occurred between 556 to 1904 A.D. It is true that they do not belong to ancient times. It must however be remembered that these instances are mere evidences of the exercise by the Brahmins of their power to deny Upanayana. The power itself must have been acquired in much more ancient times. That they have acquired it earlier is not an empty assertion without support. Satyakama Jabali's instance which is very ancient is cited generally to prove that the Varna of a man was determined by his *guna* (mental and moral qualities) and not by his birth. While this is true, it is equally true that Jabali's case proves that even in ancient times the Brahmins had acquired the right to refuse to perform Upanayana.

The enumeration of these cases has very little value for the purpose in hand unless we know the deductions that could be drawn from the decisions arrived at in them. To be able to do this, we must know the details of each case. Unfortunately, in most of them beyond the decision other details are not sufficiently full for the purpose. There is only one case that of the Brahmins *versus* Shivaji in respect of which the details are full and well-known. The case is sufficiently important and it is therefore well worth detailed examination. The deductions deducible from it are not only interesting and instructive but they throw a flood of light on the point under discussion.

VIII

As is well known, Shivaji after having established a Hindu independent kingdom in the western part of Maharashtra thought of proclaiming himself a king by having his coronation performed. It was felt by Shivaji and his friends that the coronation ceremony if it was at all to be of any value must be performed according to Vedic rites. But in carrying out his wishes Shivaji found himself faced with many difficulties. He found that whether his coronation could be performed with Vedic rites dependent entirely upon the Brahmins. Nobody was from religious point of view qualified to perform the ceremony except a Brahmin. Secondly, he found that no such ceremony could be performed unless it was proved that he was a Kshatriya. There was a third difficulty, namely, that even if he was found to be a Kshatriya, he was past the age of Upanayana and without Upanayana there could be no coronation. The third difficulty was a minor one for it could be got over by the performance of the

Vratya Stoma ceremony. The first difficulty was the greatest stumbling block. It related to Shivaji's status. The question was, was he a Kshatriya? If that could be got over, the rest was easy. Shivaji's claim that he was Kshatriya was opposed by many. His principal opponents were Brahmins who were led by his own Prime Minister Moro Pant Pingle. Unfortunately for Shivaji even his Maratha Sardars had refused to give him social precedence¹ and had ranged themselves against him. In their view, he was a Shudra. Shivaji's claim was also in direct conflict with the well established thesis long insisted upon by the Brahmins that there were no Kshatriyas in the Kali age. Shivaji was living in the Kali age. Obviously he could not be a Kshatriya. This objection to his claim for the status of Kshatriya was further strengthened by the non-performance of the ceremony of Upanayana or the investiture of the sacred thread at the proper time, which was fixed by the Sastras to be the eleventh year in the case of the Kshatriyas. This was taken to be evidence of his being a Shudra. He was however fortunate in securing the services of one Gagabhat, a renowned Brahmin, resident of Benares, learned both in the Vedas and Sastras. Gagabhat solved all difficulties and performed Shivaji's coronation# on 6th June 1674 at Raigad first after performing the Vratya Stoma and then the Upanayana.

#It seems that some Brahmins were prepared to perform Shivaji's coronation but with non-Vedic, i.e., with Pauranic rites as is done in the case of Shudras. They predicted all sorts of evils to happen if Shivaji had his coronation performed with Vedic rites. Unfortunately these evils did take place and Shivaji who undoubtedly was superstitious had another coronation performed according to non-Vedic rites. The following account of this second coronation taken from Mr. C. V. Vaidya makes interesting reading: Obstinctive and dissatisfied Brahmins there were even then as always. They did not deem the ceremony satisfactory, though it was acclaimed by the whole of Maharashtra. A poem named *Rajyabhisheka Kalpataru*, a copy of which is in the Library of the Bengal Royal Asiatic Society and which has been published from it by Itihas S. Mandal of Poona (Quarterly, Vol. X-I), embodies some objections raised against the coronation ceremony gone through. This poem is not quite contemporary, as it mentions the later idea that Shivaji was an incarnation of Siva (not of Vishnu as represented by the earlier Shivabharata) though it is of the time of Rajaram. It gives an imaginary conversation between Nischalpuri, a learned Brahmin ascetic of Benares who was an opponent of Gagabhat, and Govindbhat Barve as taking place in Konkan. It recounts the ill omens which preceded and followed the coronation, such as the death of Prataprao Gujar, the death of Kashibai, wife of Shivaji, etc., and *the* wound caused to Gagabhat himself on the nose by the falling of a rafter. The poem expressly says that Gagabhat engaged for the ceremony those Brahmins only who were his followers and refused to employ those recommended by Nis'chalpuri. Many defects in the ceremony itself, are next mentioned. Thus when Shivaji was getting into the chariot after the ceremony of ascending the throne Gagabhat himself first sat in the chariot and then Shivaji. After seeing the whole ceremony through Nis'chalpuri left the fort but told Shivaji that bad events would happen on the 13th,

22nd and 55th days. On the 13th day accordingly, Shivaji's mother died. Next a horse-shed was burnt at Pratapgad with good many horses in it and an elephant died on Sinhgad. These incidents induced Shivaji to call Nis'chalpuri back and through him and his Brahmins Shivaji performed afresh the ceremony of ascending the throne, not with Vedic rites, but Tantrik or magical. This ceremony is also described in detail. There are mentioned some Vedic mantras from Sama Veda as recited; but the ceremony was not Vedic. It was performed on Ashvin Suddha 5 (Lalita Panchami day S. 1596), as is stated at the end of the peorn. This ceremony is also mentioned by J and Nis'chapuri is also spoken of in a Mahomedan record.'—*Shivaji the Founder of Maratha Swaraj*, pp. 252-253.

Shivaji's case is important for several reasons. It is important because it proves that nobody except a Brahmin has the right to perform the Upanayana and that nobody can compel a Brahmin to perform it if he is not prepared to do so. Shivaji was the ruler of an independent kingdom and had already started styling himself Maharaja and Chhatrapati. There were many Brahmins who were his subjects. Yet, Shivaji could not compel anyone of them to perform his coronation.

It is important because it proves that the ceremony to be valid must be performed by a Brahmin. A ceremony performed by a non-Brahmin would be infructuous. It was open to Shivaji to have his coronation performed by a non-Brahmin. But he did not dare to do it. For he knew it would be without any social or spiritual efficacy.

In the third place, it is important because it proves that the power of determining the status of a Hindu depends entirely upon the will of the Brahmins. The decision in favour of Shivaji is sought to be justified by the geneology which was brought from Mewar by Shivaji's friend, Balaji Avaji, and which connected Shivaji with the Sisodyas of Mewar who were reckoned as Kshatriyas. It has been alleged that the geneology was a fabrication got up for the occasion.

Assuming it was not a fabrication, how can it justify the recognition of Shivaji's claim to be a Kshatriya? Far from establishing that Shivaji was a Kshatriya, the geneology could do no more than raise another question, namely, whether the Sisodiyas were Kshatriyas. The Sisodiyas were Rajputs. There is considerable doubt as to whether the Rajputs are the descendants of the original Kshatriyas who formed the second Varna of the ancient Indo-Aryan community. One view is that they are foreigners, remnants of the Huns who invaded India and established themselves in Rajputana and whom the Brahmins raised to the status of Kshatriyas with the object of using them as means to suppress Buddhism in Central India by a special ceremony before the sacred fire and who were therefore known as the Agnikul Kshatriyas. This view has the support of many erudite scholars

who are entitled to speak on the subject. Vincent Smith says :

In this place I want to draw attention to the fact, long suspected and now established by good evidence that the foreign immigrants into Rajputana and the upper Gangetic valley were not utterly destroyed in the course of their wars with the native princes. Many of course perished but many survived and were mixed in the general population of which no inconsiderable part is formed by their descendants. These foreigners like their fore-runners the Sakas and the Yue-chi universally yielded to the wonderful assimilative power of Hinduism and rapidly became Hinduised. Clans or families which succeeded in winning chieftainships were admitted readily into the frame of Hindu polity as Kshatriyas or Rajputs and there is no doubt that the Parihars and many other famous Rajput clans of the north were developed out of the barbarian hordes which poured into India during the fifth and sixth centuries. The rank and file of the strangers became Gujars and the castes ranking lower than Rajputs in their precedence. Further to the south, various indigenous or aboriginal tribes and clans underwent the same process of Hinduised social promotion in virtue of which Gonds, Bhars, Kharwas and so forth emerged as Chandels, Rathors, Gaharwars and other well-known Rajput clans duly equipped with pedigree reaching back to the sun AND the moon.

William Crooke says:

Recent research has thrown much light on the origin of Rajputs. A wide gulf lies between the Vedic Kshatriyas and the Rajputs of mediaeval times which it is now impossible to bridge. It is now certain that the origin of many clans dates from the Saka or Kushan invasions of more certainly from that of the White Huns who destroyed the Gupta empire about 480 A.D. The Gujar tribe connected with the latter people adopted Hinduism and their leaders formed the main stock from which the higher Rajput families sprang. When these new claimants to princely honour accepted the faith and the institution of Brahmanism the attempt would naturally be made to connect them with the heroes of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. Hence arose the body of legend recorded in these annals by which a fabulous origin from the sun and the moon was ascribed to these Rajput families ... The group denoted by the name Kshatriya or Rajput depended on status rather than on descent and it was therefore possible for foreigners to be introduced into these tribes without any violation of the prejudices of caste, which was then only partially developed. But it was necessary to disguise this admission of foreigners under a convenient fiction. Hence arose the legend how by a solemn act of purification or initiation under the superintendence of the ancient Vedic Rishis, *fire—born* septs were created to help the Brahmins in repressing Buddhism and other heresies. This privilege was confined to four septs

known as Agnikula or fire-born-viz., the Parmar, Parihar, Chalukya and Chauhan.

Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar also holds the same view. According to him, the Rjaputs are the descendents of Gujars, the Gujars were foreigners and that the Rajputs are therefore the descendants of foreigners.

The Brahmins engaged for the coronation could not have been ignorant of the origin of the Rajputs, and their claim to be descended from the Kshatriyas. But assuming that they did not know this fact they knew that there was already a previous decision of the Brahmins, namely, that there were no Kshatriyas in the Kali age. This was an old, long-standing decision. And if the Brahmins had respect for precedent, they were bound to throw out the claim of Sisodiyas as well as of Shivaji. Nobody would have blamed them, if they had done so. But the Brahmins had never accepted the law of precedent as binding upon them. With them there was no such thing as *stare decisis*.

Fourthly, it is important because it shows that the decisions of the Brahmins on matters of status were open to sale like the indulgences of the Catholic clergy. That the decision of Gagabhat was not an honest decision is obvious from the amount of money which Gagabhat and other Brahmins received as officiating priests. The amount of money spent on the coronation by Shivaji and how much of it went to Gagabhat and the Brahmins will be seen from the following details collected by Mr. Vaidya.:

"These ministers were presented each with *one* lakh of hon, one elephant, one horse, garments and ornaments. Gagabhat was given one lakh of rupees for seeing the whole ceremony through. The Dakshinas granted by Shivaji on the several occasions of the coronation ceremony were very large, as was suited to the occasion. Sabhasad reports that the whole expenditure amounted to one crore and forty-two lakhs of hons or 426 lakhs of rupees.

Sabhasad relates that 50,000 Vaidika Brahmins had collected on the occasion of Shivaji's coronation. Besides these there were Jogis, Sanyasis, etc., by thousands. These were fed or given com below the fort. It is related in contemporary papers that Shivaji, before coronation, was weighed against gold and almost every other metal as well as auspicious thing. Dutch record describing the ceremony in detail on 3rd October PS. 1684 states that Shivaji weighed 17,000 hons or 160 lbs. and he was also weighed against silver, copper, iron, etc., and against camphor, salt, sugar, butter, various kinds of fruit, betel-nuts, etc., and the value of the whole was distributed amongst Brahmins. On the 7th June, the day after the coronation, Dakshina was given in general and every Brahmin got three to five rupees and everyone else, whether woman or child two rupees and one rupee. In all, the Dakshina amounted to one and a half lakhs of hon in value.

Oxenden also states in his diary from 18th May to 13th June that Shivaji was weighed against gold and the weight 16,000 hons, together with one lakh of hons in addition were distributed as Dakshinas among Brahmins.

The above noted Dutch record further states that for the Vratya ceremony 7,000 hons were given to Gagabhat and 17,000 to other Brahmins. On the 5th of June Shivaji bathed in holy Ganges water and every Brahmin present was given 100 hons."

Can the amount paid to Gagabhat be taken as representing nothing more than a *fee* properly payable to a priest? There is one circumstance which may be depended upon to show that Gagabhat was not even paid enough. It is that what Gagabhat got was comparatively much less than what the Ministers of Shivaji got. Two facts must however be noted as telling on the other side before any conclusion is drawn from this fact. They completely nullify the argument. The first is that the ministers themselves had made large *presents* to Shivaji on his coronation. Moropant Pingle the Peshwa or Prime Minister of Shivaji, the Mujamdar had paid 7,000 hons and the other two ministers 5,000 hons each. Deducting these, the presents given to them by Shivaji must be said to be much smaller than they appear to be.

The second fact is that these ministers of Shivaji were the greatest opponents of Shivaji in this project of coronation. They were staunch in their view that he was a Shudra and that he was not entitled to have his coronation performed as it was a right which belonged to the Kshatriya only. It is therefore, no surprise if Shivaji gave them large presents with a view to silence them and win them over permanently to his side. The amount of money paid to the ministers by Shivaji is therefore no criterion to determine whether the amount paid to Gagabhat was no more than a fair fee for officiation. Indeed there are so many twists and turns taken by Gagabhat that one is forced to the conclusion that it was more than fair fee and that it included some part as illegal gratification to keep him straight.

In this business of coronation the man who took the most leading part in bringing it about was a Kayastha from Maharashtra by name Balaji Avaji who was the Personal Secretary to Shivaji. The first step Balaji took was to send three Brahmins as messengers from Shivaji to fetch Gagabhat from Benares with full information as to the status and purpose of Shivaji. What did Gagabhat do? He sent back the three messengers with a letter refusing to accept the invitation on the ground that in his view Shivaji was a Shudra and was therefore not fit for coronation. The next step Balaji took was to collect evidence in support of Shivaji's claim to the status of a Kshatriya. He succeeded in obtaining a genealogy which showed that Shivaji was a Kshatriya descended from the Sisodyas who were Rajputs and rulers of Mewad. This evidence he sent with

another messenger, to Gagabhat. Gagabhat seemed to have been impressed by the evidence for he agreed to come to Raigad to perform the coronation ceremony. What did Gagabhat do on his arrival? He said that he had re-examined the evidence and had come to the conclusion that Shivaji was a Shudra and was therefore unfit for coronation.

This is not the only somersault which Gagabhat took in this business. He took another and a very queer turn and declared that he was prepared to perform the coronation of Balaji Avaji for he was a Kayastha and therefore a Kshatriya but not of Shivaji who was Shudra. Gagabhat did not stop there. He again turned round and gave his opinion that Shivaji was a Kshatriya and that he was prepared to perform his coronation and even went so far as to write a treatise known as Gagabhatti in which he sought to prove that the Kayasthas were bastards.

What do these twists and turns show? Do they not show he was a most unwilling priest and that his willingness has had to be bought by cash? If this argument is sound then there is no doubt that his decision that Shivaji was Kshatriya was sold by him for illegal gratification.

Lastly Shivaji's case is important because it shows that the Brahmins in the matter of status did not recognise as being bound by the principle of *res judicata*. They regard themselves as free to reopen a case already decided by them. For how long did the Brahmins respect their decision that Shivaji was a Kshatriya?

Shivaji started a new era from the day of his coronation, namely, 6th June 1674 which he called the Rajyabhisheka Era. How long did it remain in vogue? Only so long as Shivaji and his descendants remained as active rulers on the throne. The moment effective sovereignty passed into the hands of the Brahmin Peshwas, they issued an order to discontinue it. Not only did they stop the use of the Era, they began using the style of the Muslim Emperors, namely, the Fasli year. The Brahmins did not stop there. They went further and began to question the very status of Shivaji's descendants as Kshatriyas. They could do nothing to the two sons of Shivaji, Sambhaji and Rajaram. Shivaji had their Upanayana performed in his life-time by Brahmins with Vedic rites. They could do nothing to his grandson, Shahu because the Brahmins had no ruling power in their hands. The moment Shahu transferred his sovereign powers to his Brahmin Peshwa their road to repudiation became clear. There is no evidence whether Ramjee Raje the successor and adopted son of Shahu, who was minor and whose guardians were the Peshwas, had his Upanayana performed and if so, whether it was performed with Vedic rites. But there is definite evidence that the Upanayana ceremony of his successors, Shahu II, who was adopted in 1777 had been performed with *Pauranic* rites and by the direction of

the Peshwas The performance of Upanayana of Shahu II with *Pauranic* rites was tantamount to his being regarded by the Peshwas as a Shudra. For it is only in the case of a Shudra that the ceremonies are performed with *Pauranic* rites. What happened to Maharaja Pratapsing who succeeded Shahu II in 1808 whether or not his Upanayana was performed and if performed whether it was performed with Vedic rites or *Pauranic* rites it is not possible to be definite. One thing, however, is definitely known that in about 1827 the Shankarcharya of Karvir in his judgement about the status of the Kayasthas of Sangli stated "*that there were no Kshatriyas in the Kali age and that documents showing that neither Shivaji, nor Sambhaji nor Shahu were Kshatriyas exist in his Daftar*". It is alleged that this statement is not to be found in the original judgement but was interpolated by the Brahmin Raja of Sangli. Be that as it may, it was a direct challenge to the status of Pratapsinha as a descent of Shivaji. Pratapsinha had to put the issue to a conference of Brahmins which was held in Satara in 1830. The majority gave a decision in favour and saved Pratapsinha from being degraded to the status of a Shudra.

Foiled in their attempt to level down one line of Shivaji to the status of a Shudra, the Brahmins began their attack on the status of the second line of Shivaji which had established itself at Kolhapur. In the reign of one of the rulers of Kolhapur by name Babasaheb Maharaj, the Palace Priest by name Raghunath Sastri Parvate took into his head to perform all ceremonies in the Palace with *Pauranic* rites. It is said that he was stopped from continuing the practice. Babasaheb died in 1886. From 1886 to 1894, all rulers were minors and the administration was in the hands of the British. There is no direct evidence as to the exact manner and mode of ceremonial performances adopted by the Palace priest. In 1902, the late Shahu Maharaj issued order to the Palace priest to perform all ceremonies in the Vedic manner. The priest refused and insisted on performing it in the *Pauranic* manner suggesting thereby that the rulers of Kolhapur were Shudras and not Kshatriyas. The part played by Sankaracharya of Karvir Math in this affair is very noteworthy. At the time of the controversy the head of the Math called Guru, had adopted a disciple (Sishya) by name Brahmanalkar and had given him all the rights of the head of the Math. At first both the Guru and the Sishya were on the side of the Palace Priest and against the Maharaja. Later on, the disciple took the side of the Maharaja and accepted his status as a Kshatriya. The Guru who remained on the side of the Priest excommunicated the Sishya. The Maharaja later on tried to create his own Sankaracharya but he too proved false to the Maharaja.

Shivaji was recognised as a Kshatriya. Obviously, that status was not a personal honour conferred on him. It was a status in tail and belonged to his family as well as to his descendants. Nobody could question it. It could be

lost by a particular descendant by doing some act which was inconsistent with it. It could not be lost generally. No act inconsistent with the Kshatriya status was attributed to any of the descendants of Shivaji. Yet the Brahmins came forward to repudiate the decision on their status.

This could happen only because the Brahmins claimed the power to do and undo the status of any Hindu at any time. They can raise a Shudra to the status of a Kshatriya. They can degrade the Kshatriya to the status of a Shudra. Shivaji's case proves that their sovereignty in this matter is without limit and without challenge.

These instances are no doubt drawn from the Bombay Presidency only. But the principles from them are clear and general in their application. They are:

- (1) That the Brahmins have the exclusive right to perform the Upanayana. Neither Shivaji, nor Pratap Sinha nor the Kayasthas, Panchals or Palashes wanted the Upanayana to be performed by a non-Brahmin. It is only once that the Kayasthas resolved to have their ceremonies performed by Kayasthas. But it was only a paper resolution.
- (2) The Brahmin has the right to say whose Upanayana he will perform and whose he will not perform. In other words, the Brahmin is the sole judge of deciding whether a given community is entitled to Upanayana.
- (3) The support of the Brahmins for the performance of Upanayana need not be based on honest grounds. It could be purchased by money. Shivaji got the support of the Brahmin Gagabhat on payment of money.
- (4) The denial of Upanayana by the Brahmins need not be on legal or religious ground. It is possible for the denial to be based on purely political grounds. The refusal by the Brahmins of Upanayana to Kayasthas was entirely due to political rivalry between the two.
- (5) The right of appeal against the denial of an Upanayana by a Brahmin is only to a Vidvat-Parishad and the Vidvat-Parishad is an assembly for which a Brahmin alone is eligible to be a member.

From the foregoing discussion. It must be clear to all that the Brahmins did possess the power to deny Upanayana. Given the powers and the motive, there is nothing strange if they used it against the Shudras.

CHAPTER XI

THE STORY OF RECONCILIATION

So far I have attempted to establish the following propositions :

- (1) That it is the Brahmins who brought about the fall of the Shudras from the second to the fourth Varna in the Indo-Aryan Society;
- (2) That the technique adopted by the Brahmins to degrade the Shudras was

to deny them the benefit of the Upanayana;

- (3) That this act of degradation was born out of the spirit of revenge on the part of the Brahmins who were groaning under the tyrannies and oppressions and indignities to which they were subjected by the Shudra kings.

While all this is crystal clear, there may be some who may yet have some such questions to ask, namely :

- (i) Why should a quarrel with a few kings make the Brahmins the enemies of the whole Shudra community?
- (ii) Was the provocation so great as to create a feeling of hatred and desire to seek vengeance?
- (iii) Were not the parties reconciled? If they were, then there was no occasion for the Brahmins to degrade the Shudras.
- (iv) How did the Shudras suffer this degradation?

These questions I admit have in them enough force and substance to call for serious consideration. It is only proper that they should be answered.

I

The question why the Brahmins, because of their quarrels with a few kings, should proceed to degrade the whole community of Shudras is not only relevant but is also very pertinent. There would, however, be no difficulty to answer this question if two things are borne in mind.

In the first place, the conflicts described in Chapter 9 between the Brahmins and the Shudra kings were not individual conflicts though they appear to be so. On the side of the Brahmins there is no doubt that the whole class was involved. Barring the episode relating to Vasishtha, all other episodes relate to Brahmins in general. On the side of the kings, it is true that the episodes mention individual kings as being involved in this conflict with the Brahmins. But it must not be forgotten that they all belonged to the same line to which Sudas belonged.

In so far as Sudas is concerned, the conflict was between the Brahmins and the Shudra clan of Kshatriyas. Of this, there can be no doubt. We have no direct evidence to say that the other offending kings also belonged to the Shudra clan of Kshatriyas. But we have other evidence which leads to the conclusion that they belonged to the same line of descent as Sudas.

Attention is invited to the following genealogical tree appearing overleaf which is taken from the Adi Parvan of the Mahabharata.*

The inter-relationship of the Kshatriya kings who came in conflict with the Brahmins throws some interesting light on the subject, *Pururavas* is the son of Ila and the grandson of Manu Vaivasvata. *Nahusha* is the grandson of

Pururavas. *Nimi* is one of the sons of Ikshvaku, who is the son of Manu Vivasvat. *Trishanku* is 28th in descent from Ikshvaku. *Sudas* is descended from Ikshvaku and is 50th in descent from him. *Vena* is the son of Manu Vaivasvata. All of them claimed descent from Manu, some from him and some from Ikshvaku. Being descendants of Manu and Ikshvaku, it is possible to argue that they were all kindred of Sudas. Given the fact that Sudas is a Shudra, it follows logically that all these kings belonged to the Shudra group.

We have no direct evidence, but there would be nothing unnatural in supposing that in these conflicts with the Brahmins, the whole Shudra community, not merely a few Shudra kings, was involved. This conflict, it must be remembered, has taken place in the ancient past when life was tribal in thought and in action, and when the rule was that what was done by one individual belonging to the tribe was deemed to be done by the whole tribe. In all ancient societies the unit was the tribe or the community and not the individual, with the result that the guilt of the individual was the guilt of the community and the guilt of the community was the guilt of every individual belonging to it. If this fact is borne in mind, then it would be quite natural to say that the Brahmins did not confine their hatred to the offending kings, but extended it to the whole of the Shudra community and applied the ban against Upanayana to all the Shudras.

MARICHI
KASYAPA=Dakshayani (one of the
daughters of Daksha Prajapati)

Adityas

Vivasvat
MANU YAMA
(had 10 sons)

Vena Dhrishnu Naushyauta Nabhaga Ikshvaku Karusha Saryati ila Prishadra Nabhagaushla

II

As to whether there was enough provocation, the matter is hardly open to question. Tempers must have risen high on both sides. There was enough combustible material on both sides for an explosion to take place.

On the side of the Brahmins, it is evident that their pretensions to social superiority and their claim for special privileges had become outrageous in character and unbearable in extent.

The following is a catalogue of the pretensions put fourth by the Brahmins:

- (i) *The* Brahmin must be acknowledged to be the guru to all Vamas by the mere fact of his birth;
- (ii) The Brahmana has the sole right of deciding upon the duties of all other classes, what conduct was proper to them and what should be their means of livelihood; and the other classes were to abide by his directions and the king was to rule in accordance with such directions;

- (iii) The Brahmana is not subject to the authority of the king. The king was the ruler of all except the Brahmana;
- (iv) The Brahmana is exempt from (1) whipping; (2) fetters being put on him; (3) the imposition of fines; (4) exile; (5) censure and (6) abandonment.
- (v) A Shrotriya (a Brahmana learned in Vedas) is free from taxes.
- (vi) A Brahmana is entitled to claim the whole of the treasure trove if he found it. If the king found it he must give half to the Brahmana.
- (vii) The property of a Brahmana dying without an heir shall not go to the king, but shall be distributed among Shrotriyas or Brahmanas.
- (viii) The king meeting a Shrotriya or a Brahmana on the road must give way to the Brahmana.
- (ix) The Brahmana must be saluted first
- (x) The person of a Brahmana is sacred. No death sentence could be passed against a Brahmana even if he is guilty of murder.
- (xi) Threatening a Brahmana with assault, or striking him or drawing blood from his body is an offence.
- (xii) For certain offences the Brahmana must receive a lesser punishment than members of other classes.
- (xiii) The king should not summon a Brahmana as a witness where the litigant is not a Brahmana.
- (xiv) Even when a woman has had ten former husbands who are not Brahmanas, if a Brahmana marries such a woman, it is he alone who is her husband and not a Rajanya or a Vaishya to whom she may have been married.

After discussing these pretensions and privileges claimed by the Brahmanas, Mr. Kane says :

"Further privileges assigned to Brahmanas are : free access to the houses of other people for the purpose of begging alms; the right to collect fuel, flowers, water and the like without its being regarded as a theft, and to converse with other men's wives without being restrained (in such conversation) by others; and the right to cross rivers without paying any fare for the ferry-boat and to be conveyed (to the other bank) before other people. When engaged in trading and using a ferry boat, they shall have to pay no toll. A Brahmana who is engaged in travelling, who is tired and has nothing to eat, commits no wrong by taking two canes of sugar or two esculent roots."

These privileges have no doubt grown in course of time and it is difficult to say which of them had become vested rights when these conflicts were raging. But there is no doubt that some of the most annoying ones such as (i), (ii), (iii), (viii) and (xiv) had then come into existence. These were enough to infuriate any decent and self-respecting body of men.

On the side of the Kshatriya kings they could not be supposed to be willing to take things lying low. How could they? It must not be forgotten that most of the Kshatriya kings who came into conflict with the Brahmins, belonged to the solar line. They differed from the Kshatriyas of the lunar line in learning, in pride and in martial spirit. The Kshatriyas who belonged to the solar line were a virile people, while those who belonged to the lunar line were an imbecile lot without any self-respect. The former challenged *the* Brahmins. The latter succumbed to them and became their slaves. This was as it should be. For while the Kshatriyas of the lunar line were devoid of any learning, those belonging to the solar line were not merely the equals of Brahmins in the matter of learning, they were their superiors. Several of them were the authors of the Vedic hymns and were known as Rajarishis. This was particularly true of those who came into conflict with the Brahmins.

According to the Anukramanika to the Rig Veda as well as according to tradition the following hymns are said to have been composed by the under mentioned kings :

"vi.15: Vitahavya (or Bharadvaja); x.9: Sindhuvipa, son of Ambarisha (or Trisiras, son of Tvashti); x.75: Sindhukshit, son of Priyamedha; x. 133, *Sudas* son of Pijavana; x. 134, Mandhatri, son of Yuvanasha; x. 179, Sibi, son of Usinara, Pratardana, son of Divodasa and king of Kasi, and Vasumanas, son of Rohidasva; and x. 148 is declared to have had *Prithi Vainya*."

The Matsya Purana also gives the list of those who composed the hymns of the Rig Veda in a passage which says :

"Bhrigu, Kashya, Prachetas, Dadhicha, Atmavat, Aurva, Jamadagni, Kripa, Sharadvata, Arishtishena, Yudhajit, Vitahavya, Suvarchas, *Vaina, Prithu, Divodasa*, Brahmasva, Gritsa, Saunaka—these are the nineteen Bhrigus, composers of hymns. Angiras, Vedhasa, Bharadvaja, Bhalandana, Ritabadha, Garga, Siti, Sankriti, Gurudhira, Mandhatri, Ambarisha, Yuvanasha, Purukutsa, Pradyumna, Shravanasya, Ajamidha, Haryashva, Takshapa, Kavi, Prishadashva, Virupa, Kanva, Mudgala, Utathya, Sharadvat, Vajasravas, Apasya, Suvitta, Vamadeva, Ajita, Brihaduktha, Dirghatamas, Kakshivat, are recorded as thirty-three eminent Angirases. These were all composers of hymns. Now learn the Kasyapas... *Vishvamitra*, son of Gadhi, Devaraja, Bala the wise Madhuchhandas, Rishabha, Aghamarshana, Ashtaka, Lohita, Bhritakila, Vedasravas, Devarata, Puranashva, Dhananjaya, the glorious Mithila, Salankayana,—these are to be known as the thirteen devout and eminent Kusikas. Manu Vaivasvata, Ida, king *Pururavas*, these are to be known as the eminent utterers of hymns among the Kshatriyas. Bhalanda, Vandya, and Sanskriti these are always to be known as the three eminent persons among the Vaishyas who were composers of hymns. Thus

ninety-one persons have been declared by whom hymns have been given birth to, Brahmanas, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas.

In the list of the authors of the Vedic hymns there are not only names of many Kshatriyas, there are names of many of the Kshatriyas who had come into conflict with the Brahmins. The Kshatriyas were the leaders among the Vedic hymn makers. The most famous Vedic hymn namely the Gayatri mantra is the production of Vishvamitra who was a Kshatriya. It was impossible for the Kshatriyas of this calibre not to take up this challenge of the Brahmins.

Their pride which was born out of their prowess and their learning must have been so greatly wounded by the pretensions of the Brahmins that when they did take up the challenge of the Brahmins they did it in a ruthless spirit. They hit the Brahmins hip and thigh. Vena forced them to worship him and no other god; Pururavas looted their wealth. Nahusha yoked them to his chariot and made them drag it through the city. Nimi flouted the exclusive and hereditary right of a family priest to perform all the ceremonies in the family and Sudas went to the length of burning alive the son of Vasishtha who was once his family priest. Surely, there cannot be greater cause to provoke the Brahmins to seek their vengeance upon the Shudras.

III

On the point of possible reconciliation between the Brahmins and the Shudras, there is no doubt some evidence on which some people might rely. Before stating my views upon the worth of this evidence, it is desirable to draw attention to it. The evidence consists of stories of reconciliation which are scattered throughout the Mahabharata and the Puranas.

The first story of reconciliation concerns the two tribes, the Bharatas to whom Vishvamitra belonged and the Tritsus to whom Vasishtha belonged. That the Bharatas were enemies of Vasishtha or Tritsus is clear from the Rig Veda itself which says :

III. 53.24.—"These sons of Bharata, O Indra, desire to avoid (the Vasishthas), not to approach them."

The story of their reconciliation is told in the Adi Parvan of the Mahabharata and runs as follows :

"And the hosts of their enemies also smote the Bharatas. Shaking the earth with an army of four kinds of forces, the Panchalya chief assailed him having rapidly conquered the earth and vanquished him with ten complete hosts. Then the king Samvarana with his wives, ministers, sons and friends fled from that great cause of alarm and dwelt in the thickets of the great river Sindhu (Indus) in the country bordering on the stream, and near a mountain.

There the Bharatas abode for a long time, taking refuge in a fortress. As they were dwelling there, for a thousand years, the venerable rishi Vasishtha came to them. Going out to meet him on his arrival, and making obeisance, the Bharatas all presented him with the *arghya*, offering, showing every honour to the glorious rishi. When he was seated, the king himself solicited him: 'Be thou our priest; let us strive to regain my kingdom.' Vasishtha consented to attach himself to the Bharatas, and as we have heard, invested the descendant of Puru with the sovereignty of the entire Kshatriya race, to be a horn (to have a mastery) over the whole earth. He occupied the splendid city formerly inhabited' by Bharata, and made all kings again tributary to himself."

The second story relates to the conflict between the Bhrigus and the Kshatriya king Kritavirya and their subsequent reconciliation. It occurs in the Adi Parvan of the Mahabharata :

"There was a king named Kritavirya, by whose liberality the Bhrigus, learned in the Vedas, who officiated as his priests, had been greatly enriched with cows and money. After he had gone to heaven, his descendants were in want of money, and came to beg for a supply from the Bhrigus, of whose wealth they were aware. Some of the latter hid their money underground, others bestowed it on Brahmins, being afraid of the Kshatriyas, while others again gave these last what they wanted. It happened, however, that a Kshatriya while digging the ground, discovered some money buried in the house of a Bhrigu. The Kshatriyas then assembled and saw this treasure, and, being incensed, slew in consequence all the Bhrigus, whom they regarded with contempt, down to the children in the womb. The widows, however, fled to the Himalaya mountains. One of them concealed her unborn child in her thigh. The Kshatriyas, hearing of its existence from a Brahmani informant sought to kill it, but it issued forth from his mother's thigh with lustre, and blinded the persecutors. After wandering about bewildered among the mountains for a time, they humbly supplicated the mother of the child for the restoration of their sight; but she referred them to her wonderful infant Aurva, into whom the whole Veda, with its six Vedangas, had entered, as the person who (in retaliation of the slaughter of his relatives) had robbed them of their eye-sight, and who alone could restore it They accordingly had recourse to him, and their eye-sight was restored. Aurva, however, mediated the destruction of all living creatures, in revenge for the slaughter of the Bhrigus, and entered on a course of austerities which alarmed both gods, asuras and men; but his progenitors (Pitris), themselves appeared, and sought to turn him from his purpose by saying that they had no desire to be revenged on the Kshatriyas. It was *not* from weakness that the devout Bhrigus overlooked the massacre perpetrated by the murderous Kshatriyas. 'When we became distressed by

old age, we ourselves desired to be slaughtered by them. The money which was buried by some one in a Bhrigu's house was placed there for the purpose of exciting hatred, by those who wished to provoke the Kshatriyas. For what had we who were desiring heaven, to do with money?' They added that they hit upon this device because they did not wish to be guilty of suicide, and concluded by calling upon Aurva to restrain his wrath, and abstain from the sin he was meditating: 'Destroy not the Kshatriyas, o son, nor the seven worlds. Suppress thy kindled anger which nullifies the power of austere fervour.' Aurva, however, replies that he cannot allow his threat to remain unexecuted. His anger, unless wreaked upon some other object, will, he says, consume himself, and he argues, on grounds of justice, expediency and duty, against the clemency which his progenitors recommended. He is, however, persuaded by the Pitris to throw the fire of his anger into the sea, where they say it will find exercise in assailing the watery element, and in this way his threat will be fulfilled. It accordingly became the great Hayasiras, known to those who are acquainted with the Veda, which vomits forth that fire and drinks up the waters."

The third story concerns the conflict between Aijuna, son of Kritavirya, the king of the Haihayas and Parashurama and the subsequent reconciliation between them. It occurs in the Vanaparvan of the Mahabharata and runs as follows :

"Arjuna, son of Kritavirya and king of the Haihayas, had, we are told, a thousand arms. He obtained from Dattatreya an aerial car of gold, the march of which was irresistible. He thus trod down gods, Yakshas, rishis, and oppressed all creatures. The gods and rishis applied to Vishnu and he along with Indra, who had been insulted by Arjuna, devised the means of destroying the latter. At this time, the story goes on, there lived a king of Kanyakubja, called Gadhi, who had a daughter named Satyavati. The marriage of this princess to the rishi Richika and the birth of Jamadagni, are then told in nearly the same way as above narrated. Jamadagni and Satyavati had five sons, the youngest of whom was the redoubtable Parashurama. By his father's command he kills his mother (who, by the indulgence of impure desire, had fallen from her previous sanctity), after the four elder sons had refused this matricidal office, and had in consequence been deprived of reason by their father's curse. At Parashurama's desire, however, his mother is restored by his father to life, and his brothers to reason; and he himself is absolved from all the guilt of murder; and obtains the boon of invincibility and long life from his father. His history now begins to be connected with that of king Arjuna (or Kritavirya). The latter had come to Jamadagni's hermitage, and had been respectfully received by his wife; but he had requitted this honour

by carrying away by force the calf of the sage's sacrificial cow, and breaking down his lofty trees. On being informed of this violence, Parashurama was filled with indignation, attacked Arjuna, cut off his thousand arms, and slew him. Arjuna's son, in return slew the peaceful sage Jamadagni, in the absence of Parashurama. Parashurama incensed at the slaughter of his father, having vowed in consequence to sweep away all Kshatriyas from the earth, seized his weapons and slaying all the sons and grandsons of Arjuna, with thousands of the Haihayas, he turned the earth into a mass of ensanguined mud. Having thus cleared the earth of Kshatriyas he became penetrated by deep compassion and retired to the forest. After some thousands of years had elapsed, the hero, naturally irascible, was taunted by Parvasu, the son of Raibhaya and grandson of Vishvamitra, in a public assembly in these words : 'Are not these virtuous men, Prataudana and the others, who are assembled at the sacrifice in the city of Yayati—are they not Kshatriyas? Thou hast failed to execute thy threat, and vainly boastest in the assembly. Thou hast withdrawn to the mountain from the fear of those valiant Kshatriyas, while the earth has again become overrun by hundreds of their race,' Hearing these words, Rama seized the weapons. The hundreds of Kshatriyas who had before been spared had now grown powerful kings. Those, however, Parashurama, now slew with their children, and all the numerous infants then unborn as they came into the world. Some, however, were preserved by their mothers. Having twenty-one times cleared the earth of the Kshatriyas, Rama gave her as a sacrificial fee to Kasyapa at the conclusion of an Ashvamedha."

After telling the story of the conflict the author of the Mahabharata proceeds to narrate the story of reconciliation in the following terms :

"Having one and twenty times swept away all the Kshatriyas from the earth, the son of Jamadagni engaged in austerities on Mahendra, the most excellent of mountains. After he had cleared the world of Kshatriyas, their widows came to the Brahmins, praying for offspring. The religious Brahmins, free from any impulse of lust, cohabited at the proper seasons with these women, who in consequence became pregnant, and brought forth valiant Kshatriya boys and girls, to continue the Kshatriya stock. Thus was the Kshatriya race virtuously begotten by Brahmins on Kshatriya women and became multiplied and long-lived. Thence there arose four castes inferior to the Brahmins."

The above instances of conflicts and conciliations between Brahmins and Kshatriyas do not relate to those Kshatriya kings who have figured in history as having declared war on the Brahmins. To turn to instances of their stories of reconciliation with the Brahmins the first is that of Kalmashapada. He is said to be the son of Sudas. The story is given in the Adiparvan of the Mahabharata.

That part of the story which narrates the enmity between Kalmashapada and Vasishtha has already been recounted. The part of the story which deals with reconciliation runs as follows :

"After roaming about over many mountains and countries, he (Vasishtha) was followed home by his daughter-in-law Adrisyanti, Shaktri's widow, from whose womb he heard a sound of the recitation of the Vedas, as she was pregnant with a child, which, when born, received the name of Parasara. Learning from her that there was thus a hope of his line being continued, he abstained from further attempts on his own life. King Kalmashapada, however, whom they encountered in the forest, was about to devour them both when Vasishtha stopped him by a blast from his mouth, and sprinkling him with water consecrated by a holy text, he delivered him from the curse by which he had been affected for twelve years. The king then addressed Vasishtha thus : 'Most excellent sage, I am Saudasa, whose priest thou art, what can I do that would be pleasing to thee?' Vasishtha answered : 'This which has happened has been owing to the force of destiny; go, and rule thy kingdom; but, o monarch, never condemn the Brahmins.' The king replied, 'Never shall I despise the most excellent Brahmins; but submitting to thy commands I shall pay thee all honour. And I must obtain from thee the means of discharging my debt to the Ikshvakus. Thou must give me the offspring which I desire.' Vasishtha promised to comply with his request. They then returned to Ayodhya. And Vasishtha having been solicited by the king to beget an heir to the throne, the queen became pregnant by him, and brought forth a son at the end of twelve years."

The second instance occurs in the Anushasanaparvan of the Mahabharata :

"At the time the eloquent king Saudasa sprung from the race of Ikshvaku proceeded, after salutation, to make an enquiry of his family priest Vasishtha, the eternal saint, the most excellent of rishis, who was able to traverse all the world, and was a treasure of sacred knowledge : 'What, o, venerable and sinless man, is declared to be the purest thing in the three worlds, by constantly celebrating which one may acquire the highest merit?' Vasishtha in reply expatiates at great length on the merit resulting from bestowing cows, and ascribes to these animals some wonderful properties so that they are the 'support of all beings,' the present and the future, and describes the cow as 'pervading the universe, mother of the past and the future'. The great self-subduing king, considering that these words of the rishi were most excellent, lavished on the Brahmins very great wealth in the shape of cows and obtained the worlds. So here we find the son of Saudasa extolled as a saint."

The third instance relates to the reconciliation in which there is reference to Sudasa's descendants. It occurs in the Shanti Parvan of the Mahabharata :

"Having received the dominion over the earth, Kasyapa made it an abode of Brahmins, and himself withdrew to the forest. Shudras and Vaishyas then began to act lawlessly towards the wives of the Brahmins, and in consequence of there being no government, the weak were oppressed by the strong, and no one was master of any property. The earth being distressed by the wicked, in consequence of that disorder, and unprotected according to rule by the Kshatriyas, the guardians of justice, descended to the lower regions. Perceiving her moving from place to place in terror, Kasyapa upheld her with his thigh (*uru*). From this circumstance she derives her name of *urvi*. The goddess Earth then propitiated Kasyapa and supplicated him for protection, and for a king. 'I have,' she said, 'preserved among females many Kshatriyas who have been born in the race of Haihayas; let them be my protectors. There is the heir of Pauravas, the son of Viduratha, who has been brought up by bears on the mountain Rikshavat; let him protect me. So, too, the heir of Saudasa, has been preserved by the tender-hearted and glorious priest. Parasara who had performed, though a Brahmin, all menial offices for him like a Shudra whence the prince's name Sarvakarman. 'After enumerating other kings who had been rescued, the Earth proceeds: 'All these Kshatriya descendants have been preserved in different places, abiding continually among the classes of dyokaras and goldsmiths. If they protect me, I shall continue unshaken. Their fathers and grandfathers were slain on my account by Rama, energetic in action. It is incumbent on me to avenge their cause. For I do not desire to be always protected by an extraordinary person (such as Kasyapa); but I will be content with an ordinary ruler. Let this be speedily fulfilled.' Kasyapa then sent for these Kshatriyas who had been pointed out by the Earth, and installed them in the kingly office."

Such is the evidence. Can anybody accept it as reliable? In my opinion, far from accepting it, one should beware of such evidence.

In the first place, all these stories of reconciliation end, for the Kshatriyas, in peace without honour. In every case, the Kshatriyas are shown to have undergone an abject surrender. The Bharatas are the enemies of Vasishtha. Suddenly there is a famine in their country. They leave the country and lose their kingdom. They implore Vasishtha their age-old enemy and pray that he become their priest and save them from the calamity. In the story of the Bhrigus and the Kshatriyas, the credit is given to the Brahmins as being too proud to fight. In the story of the Haihaya Kshatriyas and the Saudasa such as Kalmashpada, the surrender of the Kshatriyas was so to say purchased by them by offering their women to the victorious Brahmins. The stories are all doctored with a view to glorify the Brahmins and humiliate the Kshatriyas. Who can take such dirty, filthy, abominable and vainglorious stories of reconciliation

as true historical facts? Only a supporter of Brahminism can do so.

Such is the general character of the evidence on the question of reconciliation. Coming to the particular case of reconciliation between the Brahmins and the Shudras, the descendants of Sudas, there is ample evidence to show that no such reconciliation had taken place. In the first place, it cannot be gainsaid that Parasara, the son of Shakti or Shaktri, the son of Vasishtha, when he heard of the way in which his father had met his death—namely, that he was burnt alive by Sudas, the Shudra king,—determined to execute a general slaughter of all creatures. The general slaughter is, of course, a figurative term. What is meant is that Vasishtha took a vow of general vengeance against the descendants of Sudas, namely, the Shudras. It is no doubt said in the Mahabharata that Vasishtha restrained Parasara and persuaded him not to carry out his threat of vengeance by telling him how the Bhrigus and the Kshatriyas had come into conflict and how the former won against the latter by adopting non-violence. But this story cannot be true; for, like other stories it is doctored with a view to bring glory to the Brahmins.

In the second place, the strongest proof in support of the contention that there was no reconciliation between the Brahmins and the Shudras comes from the legislation enacted by the Brahmins against the Shudras. The laws against the Shudras have already been referred to. Their growth and their extraordinary character have been pointed out. All that remains to do is to say that against this background of black laws any suggestion regarding reconciliation must appear to be wholly untenable. The Brahmins not only did not forgive the Shudras, they pursued even the progeny of the Shudras—with the same spirit of relentless revenge. As many people do not seem to have any idea of this, it may be desirable to state a few facts regarding the Chandala and the Nishada.

The Chandala and Nishada are the issues of mixed marriages. Nishada is an anuloma while the Chandala is a Pratiloma. The anulomas# are held to be eligible for Upanayana. But curiously enough an exception is made to this rule. Nishada who is the son of Brahman from a Shudra woman, though an anuloma, is held not to be eligible for Upanayana. It is interesting to know why this exception was made. The only answer seems to be that this arbitrary act is an act of revenge against the children of one's enemy.

There are six anulomas as shown in the following table :

<i>Father</i>	<i>Mother</i>	<i>Name of the progeny</i>
Brahmin	Kshatriya	Murdhavasikta
Brahmin	Vaishya	Ambashtha
Brahmin	Shudra	Nishada
Kshatriya	Vaishya	Mahishya
Kshatriya	Shudra	Urga

Vaishya	Shudra	Karana
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Turning to the Pratilomas##, Manu no doubt calls, all of them as the best of men.

##Gaut, Dh, S., IV. 21, quoted by Kane, II, Part I, p. 229.

<i>Father</i>	<i>Mother</i>	<i>Name of the caste</i>
Shudra	Brahmin	Chandala
Shudra	Kshatriya	Kshattar
Shudra	Vaishya	Ayogava
Vaishya	Brahmin	Suta
Vaishya	Kshatriya	Vaidehaka
Kshatriya	Brahmin	Magadha

At the same time, the stigma on the Pratilomas is not evenly distributed among all of them. In the matter of rights and privileges, the Ayogava and the Kshattar are treated with incredible consideration, while the Chandala is subjected to unspeakable condemnation. As an illustration of this discrimination one can cite the following provisions in the Manu Smriti :

As to the Ayogava, the *Manu Smriti* merely says :

Carpenting (shall be the occupation) of an Ayogava.—x.46. As to the Kshattar the *Manu Smriti* says :

..... catching and killing animals that live in holes (is the occupation) of Kshattar.—x.49.

They are only assigned low occupations.

Compare with this what the Manu Smriti has to say about the Chandala:

"A Chandala and a boar, a cock and also a dog, and a woman in her courses and an eunuch, may not see the Brahmins eating."— iii. 239.

One may not abide with outcasts, nor Chandalas, nor Pukkakas, nor idiots, nor proud (people), nor with the low-born (people) nor with Antyavasayins.— iv.79.

One becomes pure by bathing if one has touched a Chandala, or a woman in her courses, an outcaste, also a woman lying-in, a corpse or one who has touched it.—v.85.

Manu declared the flesh of (a beast) killed by dogs (to be pure); also the flesh of an animal killed by other carnivorous (animals) (or) by Chandala (and) other Dasyus.— v.131.

Two-fold should be the fine of a criminal sentenced within a year, and just as much if one cohabit with a -Vratya woman or a Chandala woman.— viii.373.

The man, however, who foolishly allows this to be done by any other (wife)

than the one of his own caste when the latter is at hand, has been, of old, looked upon as (no whit better than) a Chandala.—ix.87.

The dwelling of Chandalas and Svapacas (should be) outside the village; they should be deprived of dishes (apapatra); their property (consists of) dogs and asses.—x.51.

Moreover, Vishvamitra, well knowing right and wrong, being oppressed by hunger proceeded to eat the ramp of a dog, having it from the hand of a Chandala.—x. 108.

At no time should a Brahmin beg property from a Shudra for the sake of sacrifice, for on offering sacrifice after begging (from a Shudra) he is born after death as a Chandala.—vi.24.

On having (carnal) intercourse with Chandala women (or low born woman), on eating their food or receiving (presents) from them, a Brahmin (if he has done so) unwittingly, falls; but (if he has done so) wittingly, he comes to an equality (with them).— xi.175.

The slayer of a Brahmin enters the womb of dogs, boars, asses, camels, cows, goats, sheep, (forest) animals, birds, Chandalas and Pukkasas—xi.55.

How different is the treatment accorded to the Chandala as compared to the treatment accorded to the Ayogava and the Kshattar when all of them are Pratilomas? Why should the Chandala be singled out as the most infamous of the Pratilomas? Only because he is the progeny of the hated Shudra. It is just an act of revenge against the children of one's enemy.

All this leaves no doubt that there was no reconciliation between the Brahmins and the Shudras.

IV

Coming to the last objection, it appears that behind it there is a feeling that the Shudras must have been a very large part of the Indo-Aryan society. With such a feeling it does appear rather strange that the Shudras should have suffered silently the perpetration of such an act as the denial of the Upanayana. Because the Shudras in the Hindu Society form such a vast proportion of the population, so the Shudras of the Indo-Aryan Society must also have formed a very large proportion of the population, can be the only basis for such a feeling. Such an inference is without any foundation, for the Shudras of the Indo-Aryan Society are absolutely different in race from the Shudras of the Hindu Society. The Shudras of the Hindu Society are not the racial descendants of the Shudras of the Indo-Aryan Society.

This confusion has arisen because of the failure to realise that the meaning of the word 'Shudras' in the Indo-Aryan society is quite different from the meaning it has in the Hindu society. In the Indo-Aryans the word Shudra was proper

name of one single people. It was the name of a people who belonged to a particular race. The word Shudra, as used in the Hindu society, is not a proper name at all. It is an epithet for a low uncultured class of people. It is a general cognomen of a miscellaneous and heterogeneous collection of tribes and groups, who have nothing in common except that they happen to be on a lower plane of culture. It is wrong to call them by the name Shudras. They have very little to do with their namesakes of the Aryan society, who had offended the Brahmins. It is a pity that these innocent and backward people of later days have been rolled up with the original Shudras and subjected to the same penalties for which they had given no cause.

That the Shudras of the Indo-Aryan and the Shudras of the Hindu Society are different and distinct is a fact which was present at one time to the minds of the Dharma Sutrakaras is quite clear. This is evident from the distinction they made between *Sacchudra* and *Asac-chudra* and between *Aniravasita* Shudras and *Niravasita* Shudras. *Sachudra* means a cultured Shudra and *asac-chudra* means an uncultured Shudra. *Nirvasita* Shudra means a Shudra living in the village community. *Anirvasita* Shudra means a Shudra living outside the village community. It is quite wrong to say as some do that this division indicates that the condition of Shudras in the eyes of the lawgivers was improving, in that some were admitted to social intercourse when formerly none was. The correct interpretation is the *Sacchudra* and *Nirvasita* Shudra refer to the Shudras of the Aryan society and the *osac-chudra* and the *Anirvasita* Shudra refer to the Shudras by epithet who had begun to form part of the Hindu society. We are concerned with the Shudra of the Aryan society. They have no connection with the later-day Shudras of the Hindu society. That being so, the fact that the Shudras of the Hindu society form such a large number cannot be made the basis for an argument that the Shudras of the Indo-Aryans must have also been a very large body of people. We do not know exactly whether the Shudras were a tribe, a clan or a moiety or a group of families. But even if they were as big as a tribe, they could not have been larger than a few thousand. The Bharatas are being expressly spoken of in the Rig Veda, vii.33.6, as being small in number. The Satapatha Brahmana referring to a horse sacrifice performed by the Panchala king Son Satrasaha says:

"When Satrasaha makes the Ashvamedha offering the Taurvasas arise, six thousand and six and thirty, clad in mail."

If it is any indication that the tribe of Taurvasas numbered six thousand, the Shudras could not be very many.

Apart from the question of numbers, what could the Shudras have done to prevent the calamity? If some Brahmins whom they had offended refused to perform their Upanayana, could they have got the services of other Brahmins

whom they had not offended? Such a possibility would of course depend upon various circumstances. In the first place, we do not know whether all the Brahmins had formed a common front and whether it was possible to break up that front. We do not know that at the time when the issue was a burning issue the Brahmins had become a caste. But it is clear that even in the times of the Rig Veda, Brahmins were a class by themselves, had developed class consciousness and were keen on maintaining class interests. In that event it would have been difficult for the Shudras to break up the conspiracy of the Brahmins. Secondly, it might also be that the performance of Upanayana had become the exclusive right of the family priest. The story of king Nimi shows that the performance of sacrifices had become the exclusive right of the family priest. If there is substance in these suggestions, then obviously the Shudras could not have done much to prevent the common front of the Brahmins operating against them.

Another possibility was the forging of a common front among all the Kshatriyas which might have had the effect of weighing down the opposition of the Brahmins. Whether such a thing was possible can only be a matter of speculation. In the first place, did the Shudras realise what the effect of the loss of Upanayana was going to be on their future status? I am sure they did not. Secondly, were the Kshatriyas a united body of people? I doubt if they were. Thirdly, had the other Kshatriya kings any sympathy for the Shudras? If the story of the Dasharajna Yuddha told in the Rig Veda is true, it is quite obvious that there was not much love lost between the Shudras and the other non-Shudra Kshatriyas.

Taking all these circumstances into consideration, there is nothing strange if the Shudras suffered the denial of the Upanayana by the Brahmins to be a fact.

CHAPTER XII

THE THEORY IN THE CRUCIBLE

THE object of this essay was to trace the origin of the Shudras and discover the causes of their degradation. After an examination of historical material and of theories suggested by various writers— orthodox as well as modern—¹ have put forth a new thesis. In the preceding chapters, it has been presented in parts for the facility of laying the foundation of each part separately. It is time these parts were assembled together for a full and complete understanding of what the thesis is. It may be summarized as follows :

- (1) The Shudras were one of the Aryan communities of the Solar race.
- (2) The Shudras ranked as the Kshatriya Varna in the Indo-Aryan Society.

- (3) There was a time when the Aryan Society recognized only three Varnas, namely. Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas. The Shudras were not a separate Varna but a part of the Kshatriya Varna.
- (4) There was a continuous feud between the Shudra kings and the Brahmins, in which the Brahmins were subjected to many tyrannies and indignities.
- (5) As a result of the hatred towards the Shudras due to their tyrannies and oppressions, the Brahmins refused to invest the Shudras with the sacred thread.
- (6) Owing to the loss of the sacred thread the Shudras became socially degraded, fell below the rank of the Vaishyas and came to form the fourth Varna.

It now remains to assess the validity of this thesis. It is usual for the author to leave this to others to do it. I propose to make a departure and myself enter upon the task of putting my thesis to test. I do so because it gives me an opportunity of vindicating my thesis.

II

I can well imagine my critics to allege that my thesis rests upon a single statement from the Mahabharata in which Paijavana is described as a Shudra; that identification of Paijavana with Sudas is not proved beyond the shadow of doubt; that the description of Paijavana as a Shudra does not occur in any other place except in a single place in the Mahabharata. How can a theory built on such weak foundations be acceptable? They are bound to invoke the usual agreement that a chain is not stronger than its weakest link. I am sure that my thesis cannot be discredited and demolished in such an easy manner.

In the first place, I do not admit that a thesis cannot be built up on a single piece of evidence. It is a well-known principle of the law of evidence that witness must be weighed and not numbered. The number of witnesses is a less important consideration than the weight to be attached to the individual testimony of each or to the sum of the testimonies of all taken together. There is no reason to doubt the truth of the statement that Paijavana was a Shudra. The author of the Mahabharata has no reason to give a false description. Writing after such a long time, no motive, no partiality could be attributed to him. The only conclusion one can draw is that the author was recording a true tradition.

The fact that Paijavana is not described as a Shudra in the Rig Veda does not militate against the truth of the statement which occurs in the Mahabharata. Many explanations can be given for the absence of the word Shudra from the description of Paijavana in the Rig Veda. The first explanation is that it is wrong

to expect such a description in the Rig Veda. The Rig Veda is a book of religion. A description such as Shudra could not be expected in a book of religion. It would be irrelevant. But such a description may well be expected to occur in a book of history such as the Mahabharata wherein as a matter of fact it does.

The other explanation for the infrequent mention of the word Shudra in connection with Sudas which I can think of is that it was unnecessary. Descriptions in terms of kula, gotra, tribe, etc., are really speaking marks of identification. Marks of identification are necessary in the case of lesser people. They are unnecessary in the case of famous men. There is no doubt that Sudas was the most famous man of his time. It was unnecessary to describe him as Shudra for the purpose of identifying him to the people. This is not altogether a mere matter of speculation. One can cite historical instances. Take the case of Bimbisara and Pasenadi, two kings who lived in the time of Buddha. All other kings who were their contemporaries are described in the literature of the time by their *gotra* name. But these two are just spoken of by their personal names. Prof. Oldenberg* who noticed this fact explains this on the ground that they were well-known and did not stand in need for being described by their *gotra* names.

III

But it is really wrong to suppose that my theory is based on the solitary passage in the Mahabharata or on the identification of Paijavana with Sudas. Nothing of the kind. The thesis is not supported by a single chain and therefore the argument that a chain is not stronger than its weakest link does not apply to it. The case is supported by several parallel chains. The weakness of a link in one of them cannot be said to weaken the support. The weakness of one link in one chain throws the whole weight on other chains. Consequently, before concluding that the theory has broken down, it is necessary to prove that the other chains are not able to sustain the weight.

The description of Paijavana as Shudra and the identification of Paijavana with Sudas of the Rig Veda is not the only chain which supports the thesis. There are other chains. One of these is the admission in the Satapatha and Taittiriya Brahmanas that there were only three Vamas and the Shudras did not form a separate Varna. The second consists of evidence that Shudras were kings and ministers of State. The third consists of evidence that the Shudras were at one time entitled to Upanayana. All these are strong chains quite capable of taking all extra weight arising out of a possible breakdown of the first chain.

As far as evidence is concerned, absolute certainty amounting to

demonstration is seldom to be had and I do not claim absolute certainty for my thesis. But I do claim that the evidence in support of the theory is both direct as well as circumstantial, and where it is conflicting it is supported by strong probabilities in favour of it.

IV

I have shown what strength there is in the thesis I have presented. I will now proceed to show that the thesis is a valid one. There is one test which I think is generally accepted as the right one by which to appraise the validity of a thesis. It is that a thesis which demands acceptance must not only suggest a solution, but must also show that the solution it proposes answers the riddles which surround the problem which it claims to have solved. It is this test that I propose to apply to my thesis.

Let me begin by listing in one place the riddles of the Shudra. The following include the most important of them :

- (1) The Shudras are alleged to be non-Aryans, hostile to the Aryans, whom the Aryans are said to have conquered and made slaves. How is it then that the rishis of the Yajur Veda and the Atharva Veda should wish glory to the Shudras and express a desire to be in favour of the Shudras?
- (2) The Shudras are said not to have the right to study the Vedas. How is it then that Sudas, a Shudra, was the composer of the hymns of the Rig Veda?
- (3) The Shudras are said to have no right to perform sacrifices. How is it that Sudas performed the Ashva-Medha sacrifice? Why does the Satapatha Brahmana treat the Shudra as a sacrificer and give the formula of addressing him?
- (4) The Shudras are said not to have the right to Upanayana. If this was so from the very beginning, why should there be a controversy about it? Why should Badari and the Samskara Ganapati say that he has a right to Upanayana?
- (5) The Shudra is not permitted to accumulate property. How is it that the Maitrayani and Kathaka Samhitas speak of the Shudras being rich and wealthy?
- (6) The Shudra is said to be unfit to become an officer of the State. How is it then that the Mahabharata speaks of Shudras being ministers to kings?
- (7) It is said that the duty of the Shudra is to serve, in the capacity of a menial, the three Vamas. How is it then that there were kings among the Shudras as testified by the case of Sudas and other cases mentioned by Sayana?
- (8) If the Shudra had no right to study the Vedas, if he had no right to Upanayana, if he had no right to sacrifice, why was he not given the right

to have his Upanayana, to read the Vedas and to perform sacrifice?

- (9) The performance of Upanayana of the Shudra, his learning to read the Vedas, his performing the sacrifices, whether they were of any value to the Shudra or not, were certainly occasions of benefit to the Brahmins in as much as it is the Brahmins, who had the monopoly of officiating at ceremonies and of teaching the Vedas. It is the Brahmins who stood to earn large fees by allowing the Shudra the right to Upanayana, the performance of sacrifices and the reading of the Vedas. Why were the Brahmins so determined to deny these concessions to the Shudras, when granting them would have done no harm and would have increased their own earnings?
- (10) Even if the Shudra had no right to Upanayana, sacrifices and Vedas, it was open to the Brahmins to concede him these rights. Why were these questions not left to the free will of the individual Brahmins? Why were penalties imposed upon a Brahmin if he did any of these prohibited acts?

How can these riddles be explained? Neither the orthodox Hindu nor the modern scholar has attempted to explain them. Indeed they do not seem to be aware of the fact that such riddles exist. The orthodox Hindu does not bother about them. He is content with the divine explanation contained in the *Purusha Sukta* that the Shudra was born from the feet of the Purusha. The modern scholar is content with the assumption that the Shudra in his origin is a non-Aryan aboriginal, for whom the Aryan quite naturally prescribed a different code of laws. It is a pity that none of these classes of people have cared to acquaint themselves with the riddles which surround the problem of the Shudra, much less have they thought of suggesting a theory of the origin of the position of the Shudra capable of solving them.

With regard to my thesis it will be seen that it can explain everyone of these riddles. Postulates (1) to (4) explain how the Shudras could be kings and ministers and why the rishis should praise them and desire to be in their good books. Postulates (5) and (6) explain why there was a controversy over the Upanayana of the Shudra, also why the law not only denied the right to the Shudra but imposed penalties upon a Brahmin, helping to make it effective. Indeed there is no riddle which the thesis does not solve. The thesis, if I may say so, is a close and a perfect fit. Few theses can therefore have a better title deed than this.

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